



United States Department of the Interior

Office of Inspector General

Washington, D.C. 20240

Former Interior Department Deputy Pleads Guilty to Lying to Congress

J. Steven Griles, who served until January of 2005 as the second-highest ranking official within the Department of the Interior, pleaded guilty to Obstruction of Proceedings Before the United States Senate, in violation of 18 U.S.C Section 1505. In commenting on today's guilty plea, Earl E. Devaney, the Inspector General at Interior said,

Today's guilty plea clearly establishes that former Deputy Secretary J. Steven Griles was ready and willing to serve as Jack Abramoff's "man inside Interior." In retrospect, all the warning signs were there. In March of 2004, my Office publicly released the results of our two year investigation that detailed Griles' ethical lapses; a report that was virtually ignored. Griles' criminal and unethical conduct represents an abuse of the trust of the American people and seriously undermined the excellent work of the many dedicated career and political employees of this venerable Department.

I am most proud of the willingness of the many current and former Department employees who told the truth about this top Interior official, sometimes at great risk to their own careers. I also commend the team of investigators and prosecutors from my Office, the FBI, and the Public Integrity Section of the Department of Justice who doggedly pursued this criminal activity. I am confident that this conviction will serve as a warning to other government officials that when they intentionally make false statements or otherwise engage in misconduct, they will be vigorously prosecuted.